

SUMMER 2017

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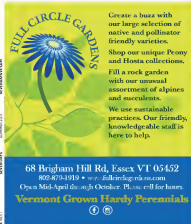
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SUMMER 2017

Hello, gloriously green Vermont.

After a cool and rainy spring, it's time to go full solar. We're creating Eden-esque spaces, pinging clutter and of course, talking about... Find inspiration in Seven Days quarterly supplement about home, design and real estate.

Building With Soul

An architect's Stowe home combines energy efficiency with personal flair
BY SARA W. BOGART

Peace on Earth

A Lincoln garden designer creates spaces of refuge
BY SALLY POLAK

Off the Market

Want to buy a home near Burlington? Good luck.
BY CAROLINE SHARP

Sit for a Spell

Nothing says "summer relaxation" like an Adirondack chair
BY NACHEL ELLIOTT-JONES

Good Radiance

How to streamline your stuff and satisfy your soul
BY JULIA SHIPLEY

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ON THE COVER

The Hunt family residence in Stowe, photographed by Jim Westphalen



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Building With Soul

An architect's Stowe home combines energy efficiency with personal flair

BY SUZANNE POSHAZZER

Standing in the kitchen of architect Harry Hunt's Stowe home, leaning against the poured-concrete countertop, you can see nearly every part of the first floor. There's the open living room, with a couch, cozy window seat and plenty of books (but no television). There are wrought-iron lights from Hubbardton Forge, which hang from the ceiling and illuminate the simple wooden dining room table. And there's a view through the windows in any direction you care to look.

CLICK HERE FOR LIST

The Hunt family and their Stew's haven's outdoor oasis.
The master bedroom has a glass-enclosed shower and separate bathtub.
The outside deck overlooks the "honey" tree to rolling windows and doors.



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GREAT SUSTAINABLE DESIGNS SHOULD FEEL DIFFERENT.

HARRY HUNT



Building With Soul

On the outside, Hunt's 2,700-square-foot house is all corrugated steel and wood, streamlined and elegant. It is not just a home for his family of four — wife Stephanie and children Abigail, 15, and Tucker, 10 — but also a model for the kind of energy-efficient buildings "with soul" that Hunt likes to design for his clients.

From the thermal envelope that keeps the space warm in winter and cool in summer to the lofty ceilings to the numerous Vermont materials used in its construction, the structure exemplifies ways in which beauty and sustainability can intertwine.

"We tried to make the house as energy efficient as we could," Hunt says, without sacrificing the home's comfort and personality.

To that end, Hunt combined blown-cellulose insulation with a type of rigid foam — called polyisocyanurate — that is more ecologically friendly than the old pink and blue stuff. He also forwent a basement in favor of a first-floor mechanical room and lots of clever built-in storage.

Hunt wanted to put each room down to its essentials. The home office



TOP TO LEFT: HUNT

The 2,700-sq-ft home was constructed from corrugated steel and wood. The playroom (right) is a TV room and left, a child's room.

is a cozy 6-by-7-foot nook on the first floor. Each child's room is 10 by 10 feet — "which is about as small as a bedroom can be, functionally," says the architect. Yet, because of Hunt's careful design, these rooms feel functional rather than cramped. "As things get smaller, you have to be more thoughtful and intentional," he says.

The marching band's bedrooms, for instance, are graced in cheery accent colors of their choosing and feature plenty of storage for toys and clothing. Their hobbies were considered, too: Tucker's room contains hanging storage and containers for what may constitute the largest Nerf gun arsenal in Vermont. His wall is decorated with a collection of star Wars decals. Each youngster has a private loft. Abigail has equipped hers with a grow light for her seed starts.

Those elevated hallways provide the children with autonomy and privacy. "It's hard for parents to get there," Hunt



Building With Soul

prints out. "You can, but you have to climb a ladder."

The playroom—which triples as a TV room and guest room—has its own bathroom and loft. That's where the guest bed is, but the red pallet couch below can sleep two, as well.

The bright and simply decorated master bedroom is larger than the children's rooms, equipped with a separate closet across the hall. Its bathroom features Vermont slate tiles and a bathtub separate from the glass-enclosed, double-headed shower, which has a fetching pebbled floor. The setup is both efficient and romantic.

In the upstairs hallway the cooling towers overhead. Soft light seeps in from a frosted, energy-efficient skylight that faces north. The ventilation system—necessary in such a tightly constructed house—is so located nearby, as high up that it barely

catches the eye. The crisp white walls and a niche at the top of the staircase—displaying a large, smooth rock that the family brought home from Maine—lead the space a gallery-like quality.

Highlights of the Hunt house include the use of numerous floor-to-ceiling doors and windows on the ground floor and the careful crafting of exterior spaces. A covered outdoor "room" has a soaring wood ceiling—it's easy to forget it's there, although it offers protection from the sun and rain. The patio furniture is rustic and modern.

Why use so much glass in a cold climate, or construct an outdoor sitting room? In part, it's to supply balance, says Hunt. Usable in old farmhouse, with looks and drafts that literally let you know which way the wind is blowing, homes that have to contemporary standards of energy efficiency are tightly insulated.

Thus, it's easier to lose touch with nature. Hunt explains that, in his house, it

can be "20 below outside, and you wake up and it's 68 degrees, and you can walk around in your pajamas, your underwear, and you'll never know. You might think it's a sunny warm day." So he continues, "You have to be a little careful and look at the thermometer to decide what to wear."

The more the inhabitants use the outside world, the more they stay in touch with nature's happening beyond the building's walls. Says Hunt, "It's an important part of being human, to hear the birds and feel the breeze."

Another foundational principle of Hunt's designs is taking into account the habits of his clients and their families. He gives each client an 11-page questionnaire so he can understand their daily habits and designs with those in mind.

Hunt, who also designs commercial buildings, points out that every project is site-specific. "You're not designing for everywhere. You're designing for that where," he says. For instance, an

LEFT TO RIGHT:

The screen frame acts as both a storage device and a light fixture. The screen frame keeps the children's small bedrooms functional, not cluttered. An energy-efficient skylight lights up the upstairs hallway.

architect needs to consider the way light will fall through the windows at different seasons and the thermal aspects that light will have, as well as pondering where the windows should be placed for optimal views.

Overall, Hunt says, "Great sustainable designs should feel different. Setting on a sustainable building, your experience is different than it would be with any other building. It should make you aware of about sustainability."

In his house, that's certainly the case. ☑

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Peace on Earth

A Lincoln garden designer creates spaces of refuge

BY SALLY POLLAK

The gardens in front of Sam and Kathryn Wyatt's Lincoln home are a work in progress. There are stone pathways and clusters of chamomile, a birdbath and stalks of allium. Vegetables grow among the flowers and herbs, and Kathryn says she'll plant more in coming years.





"Gardens are never done," Ken says. "That's the point."

He's not allowed to here, Kathryn says, but he pulls a "weed" that isn't a weed. For Sam is the garden designer by profession. His small firm, Studio Reg, does nature-based landscaping with a particular focus on creating spaces that provide a sense of solace. Regi is a Japanese word for the ground on which people walk on their way to a tea ceremony — a passageway that might be transformative.

Such spaces can be created by microcosms, including an arbor that serves as a gateway between a driveway and a garden, a series of strategically placed plantings and stones that act as pedestals along a path, or steps that slow a person's pace as they approach a certain area of the garden.

"The reason we can live with nature and natural forms, the happier we'll be here," Ken says. "It's very good for our souls."

The Wyatts live with their two children on 10 acres in Lunenburg, where they moved three and a half years ago from

Mount Desert Island in Maine. They came to Vermont to be closer to family and because they were "too young to be this island" on a dead-end road in coastal Maine, Kathryn explains.

The couple met at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston about 20 years ago, when they were assigned to work on an interdisciplinary project together. He was a sculpture student, she studied fiber art. Together, they made a woven scarf based on the changing seasons.

"It was the best collaboration pretty much from the start," Kathryn recalls.

These days, working on a shared home studio, the Wyatts are bound by a common aesthetic theme: incorporating natural elements into their work. They use a variety of techniques to make botanical art.

Sam presses flowers in a vintage custom plant press dubbed "Howard the Beast", combined with color washes, these are sold in originals or limited-edition giclee prints on the Studio Reg website. Kathryn uses flower pigments in her printmaking, extracting color by soaking a stack of flowers sandwiched between pieces of paper, placing the stack in a coloring pot with a wooden top and simmering it on the stove top for

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ELECTRIC HIGH TOP LIFT

A month-long project that led to a third in local gardens in the end at Studio Reg. Ken and Kathryn Wyatt in their Lunenburg home's first garden.

FRANCE ON EARTH 10 PM



SEVEN TIPS FOR CREATING A CALMING GARDEN

Create a backdrop. Develop the feeling of a sheltered retreat. When we feel safe and secure, we can let down our guard and enjoy our surroundings throughout the day — the highest goal of landscaping. The feeling of wind on your skin. These sensations are magnified when we are at ease.

Take it down. Use contrast in landscaping plants and materials. Rely on the soft textures of foliage and the many shades of green (dark and white, rather than bright, bold colors). Contrast it with materials such as natural stone and untreated wood rather than slick, man-made products. These have a calming effect on the mind and create understated elegance that stands the test of time.

Be aware of thresholds. Be mindful of stepping from one space into another. Find ways to heighten these transitions to allow each elemental space to feel an otherworldly escape, through design using stepping stones, or plant a tree to mark entry.

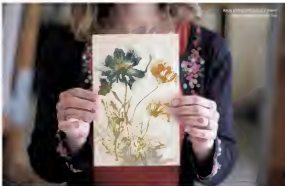
Create a garden ritual. Set a cap on making a ritual in your favorite spot, or take a dose of salt using a lavender bath. Develop a ritual that brings tranquility to connect with your garden.

Bring the Garden Inside. Cut plants and bring them into your home. Hang artwork that reflects natural forms. Design the view from your kitchen sink or other indoor-facing windows. The more we can blur the line between inside and outside, and reveal natural beauty into our daily lives, the closer connected we'll be to our environment.

Find inspiration in the Island. Would it be a place that you are drawn to in the winter landscape? Inspiration in their sensibility of what makes them unique. Is the place under deepened shade, or is it made up of dramatic jagged stone? Does it include a beautiful view? Take these ideas and translate them into your own garden, doubling their essence on an appropriate scale. A mossy boulder under a yucca plant can evoke the same emotional response as a deep mountain river.

Get on the List. Try to integrate your garden's "sense of place" (whether it's always in a local market, your personal space, or even a well-kept within its surroundings). Be aware of your specific growing conditions and work with them, not against them. Relationships are constant allies.

Source: Sam Wyatt of Studio 101



Peace on Earth

two hours. The flowers lose their impressions on the paper as lively shapes and interesting colors. Her prints are also available for purchase online.

"It's a really nice way to spend time in the garden and bring that inside," Kathryn says. "And keep it, indefinitely."

The studio also holds a drafting table for Sam's garden-design projects. He began the work when he finally lived in Maine and, after moving to Vermont, continued it at Rocky Dale Gardens in Bristol. Two years ago, Sam opened Studio

101, a design practice that draws on his experience studying garden design in Japan. More recently, he earned a certificate in health care and therapeutic garden design through a program of the Chaceo Botanic Garden.

In his designs, Sam's intention is to create spaces that possess restorative energy and "therapeutic value," he says. "In the design landscape, as in architecture or wallpaper," he says, "these

THE MORE WE CAN
LIVE WITH NATURE
AND NATURAL FORMS,
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SAM WYATT

qualities can be cultivated as a Burlington backyard or on a rural acreage. (See sidebar for Sam's tips on crafting each garden.)

"I'm really interested in building calming and beautiful places that take you away from the stresses of everyday life," Sam adds. "People are intuitively seeking those types of places."

In 2013, he collaborated on a project with Will Wallace-Ginslow of Greening Timberworks. For a garden that is tucked in the corner of a backyard in Bristol, the Concorda woodworker built a meditation yoga hut. Sam contributed a stone-carved water basin that complements the black cherry and white cedar structure and nearby tall grasses.

The beauty and fascination of a garden, Sam says, is derived in part from the intersection of what the gardener

intends and what actually results. "There are the hopes and dreams of what the garden is going to look like, and then the reality of what happens because of a nature throwing unexpected accidents at you."

An observant gardener can turn an "accident" into a landscaping feature. An example of this can be found on the Wyatt's property, where a dead black cherry tree has been left in its place.

The trunk of the tree has split and cracked, and one end of it rests on the ground. The tree's mangled configuration forms a natural gateway, or threshold. Sam values this kind of landscaping feature, he says, because it helps guide a person from one space to another, and even from one state of mind to another.

In this instance, the naturally felled black cherry forms a passageway from the family's backyard to winter landscape down a steep grade behind the house.

At the foot of the hill, a capstone, sometimes fast-moving stream, River Meadow Brook, flows into the New Haven River. The Wyatt's property encompasses ponds and falls along the brook, as well as swimming places and sitting spots. The two are mindfully and incrementally placed in garden-like spaces beside the stream — clearing paths and cultivating areas for hanging out, reflecting or playing.

Right now they're in an "edible" phase, describe Sam, pruning and removing plants and trees to see more clearly what is there so they can highlight interesting features. For example, a century-old beech tree that stands sentinel by the river and a big rock across the path together form a natural enclosure. It's a place that sparks the Wyatt's gardening imagination. A few European spruce pines, peeling up from the forest floor, has been noted and tended.

Looking into the future is a desire as well, the couple envision building workshops in the woods for mixing herbs.

"We like to expand the definition of what a garden is," Sam says, "from cultivated flowers and vegetables to a dialogue with our whole property." ☺

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Off the Market

Want to buy a home near Burlington? Good luck.

BY CAROLYN SHAPIRO

Nic and Amy Anderson loved their 800-square-foot house in South Burlington, but once their two kids reached school age, they needed more space and a second bathroom.

The one-year family hoped to find a place under \$300,000 within the school district and biking distance from grocery stores and Champlain College. That's where Nic works as the coordinator of sustainable transportation and, aptly, commutes by bike all year long.

But so few homes were available — and any listings sold so quickly — that the Andersons even offered \$4,000 more than the asking price on a Shelburne house. They lost that bidding war and are far a different home. Another seller told them not to bother looking, because so many potential buyers already had expressed interest.

Meanwhile, the bungalow near Burlington International Airport that the Andersons had bought eight years ago for \$177,000 got multiple offers and sold in two days.

That's when the family's real estate agent sent postcards to homeowners on their target area, between Hinesburg Road and Danvers Street, asking if any would consider selling. A couple in the middle of a divorce responded and, a few weeks later, agreed a contract to sell their four-bedroom, two-bathroom house for just under \$300,000. The Andersons expect to close on the purchase and the sale of their place at the end of June.

"It was a challenging process," Nic Anderson says now. "It's just super stressful that there's not anything out there to look at. If you say, 'I want to be in this neighborhood,' then you might wait six months."



It's nothing new that the housing market in Chittenden County is tough, but real estate experts say the disparity between high demand and low supply is unusually severe right now, particularly for home buyers looking to spend \$200,000 to \$400,000.

"Under half a million [dollars] is as tight as I've seen it in the past 20 years," says Steve Lipkin, the Andover's assistant agent with Coldwell Banker Global & Residential Realty.

As of April, the number of homes for sale countywide has dropped more than 24 percent from the same month in 2005 — from 671 to 504, according to reports that Zillow, a company that compiles multiple listings service and market data, provides to Top Source Realty's International Realty.

Interestingly, prices across the board have not climbed in the county. The average price of homes sold was \$306,000 in April, it was \$310,000 a year earlier. And the median price dipped slightly, from \$282,000 to \$285,000.

In Burlington, the number of single-family homes for sale remains drastically low but largely unchanged from a year ago: 41 available properties in April, compared with 43 last year. The lack of inventory frustrates many who hope to buy in the city.

While supply fails to meet demand, prices are climbing in Burlington. The average price of homes sold jumped nearly 30 percent in April over the previous year — to \$392,000.

Average prices can tip sharply upward in a given month, as the result of one very expensive home sale. By contrast, the median price is the middle point of all home sales, meaning that an equal number of properties sold for more and less. That median price — \$386,000 — in Burlington was also up 16 percent in April from a year prior.

In most of Chittenden County, especially Burlington, "It's so hard to find anything under \$250,000 that's not a condo," says Steve Davis, CEO of Sotheby's, based in South Burlington.

The situation is similar but not quite as dramatic around the rest of the state. The number of residences for sale dropped less than 18 percent from a year ago — from 1,414 to 1,160 in April. The average year-over-year price of homes stayed the same, at \$237,000.

The exception to the tight-squeeze trend is most of Vermont's houses at the luxury end of the market — those priced at \$1 million or more. At this level, there are more houses than buyers. Those listed in Chittenden County are larger in size as well — 945 days on average in April — compared with 49 days for homes costing \$250,000 or less and 75 days for those in the \$300,000 to \$599,999 range.

"There aren't as many people looking for huge houses as there were," Davis says. "And there are more people looking for urban places than there were."

The recession certainly made more home buyers more wary of taking on a bigger mortgage than they could handle. And limited supply is preventing some from putting their

existing homes on the market, fearing that it will be too hard to upgrade to something else.

Not surprisingly, Davis notes, "There's a lot of renovation going on. People are staying in their homes."

That didn't stop the Andover's from making a move, but they immediately recognized that the market had changed since they bought their first house in 2009. "It was relatively easy, actually," she says of that purchase. "We didn't really need to shop around too much, but there was definitely plenty to look at."

Clearly, in this market, home buyers have to temper their expectations. They might have to boost the amount they're willing to spend to get what they want or compromise on the details to match what they can afford. Or they can look outside

of Chittenden County to get more bang for their buck. In the nearest communities, it's still challenging to find a great house at a reasonable price. But Lipkin points out, buyers who are willing to drive a little further from Burlington can often find decent deals in Franklin County and can stay close to Interstate 89 for commuting. While inventory in that county fell 20 percent from April 2016, average sale prices dipped about 5 percent, to \$194,000, the median sale price fell 13.5 percent, to \$189,000. The Franklin County market just isn't as hot, probably because many buyers are less interested in living further from Chittenden County. If demand starts to pick up, prices will likely follow.

Tight markets require drastic and creative measures. The Andover's

warned the first buyers who proposed Lipkin to pursue would-be sellers about offering their homes. He has tried the direct-mail approach a few times in recent years, particularly for people interested in specific neighborhoods.

"You've got to think outside of the box in this market, if you're not a buyer," he says. In the Andover's case, several homeowners responded about possibly selling.

What buyers really need are more choices. Multiple construction projects in and around Burlington propose to bring as many as 2,000 new houses onto the market, according to Davis' count. But they won't provide much benefit to buyers anytime soon, he says.

For now, developers at moves slowly in Vermont, the result of a detailed and extensive permitting process. "They're not all ready for prime time right now," Davis says of the projects. "We barely make incremental progress."

Also, many of the developments closest to the city center — such as the proposed renovation of Burlington Town Center — include more apartments for rent than condominiums for purchase. Easing the rental crunch in and around the city will help keep apartments affordable, thus encouraging more tenants to rent longer and stay out of the buying market. And that could help reduce demand for single-family homes, balancing out supply.

Still, Lipkin doesn't give local home buyers much reason for optimism. "I think we're going to see more of the same for the next year or so," he says. ♥

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Sit for a Spell

Nothing says "summer relaxation" like an Adirondack chair

BY RACHEL ELIZABETH JONES

Although the Adirondacks are located in New York, the chair named after the mountain range has become an icon of New England — particularly of the region's summers. From the 9-foot-tall red chair that graces the lawn of Wendell's Furniture in Colchester to the clusters of yellow Westport models dotting Middlebury's Bread Loaf campus, Adirondack — or Adirondack-style — chairs are a Vermont classic, too. Nest checks in with three local purveyors of the outdoor staple to learn more about the chairs' materials and history, as well as about customer favorites.

Lamoille Woodcraft

3076 Route 1, Ferrisburgh, 307-9239
980 Route 15, Hyde Park, 888-6863

Clint Caskey joined the Mennanete Church when he was 22 years old. At the time, he was a statistics professor at Virginia Tech — but, as he says by phone, he became "increasingly uncomfortable" in that environment as a Christian and Mennanite. "That's where, he adds, I began looking for something else to do."

Encouraged by members of his church, Caskey started teaching himself outdoor furniture making. After a five-year search for a place to settle down, he and his family moved from Virginia to Westport, Vt., in 2001. He established his workshop and business in the neighboring town of Hyde Park — and Adirondack chairs were one of the first items he sold. Lamoille Woodcraft opened its second outlet, along Route 7 in Ferrisburgh, in 2012. Here, visitors can find single Adirondack chairs, as well as benches and ottomans, available in both wood and poly — a type of recycled plastic. On a recent visit to this location, a shop assistant explains how over time a chair made from Vermont white cedar (STW) will weather from yellow to a silvery gray.

Caskey's seasonal wooden option is made from pine, which can be varnished. Both woods are less expensive than their poly counterparts. The store's best seller is a deep-green poly single chair (STW).

"It's very fitting here in Vermont with the landscape," Caskey says. "It's a very natural color."

A blue poly chair from Lamoille Woodcraft



The Fun Chair, Gelbke from Livingston Farm

Livingston Farm

40 Route 116, Bristol, 388-0980; livingstonfarm.us

"Adirondack is a very loose term," says Livingston Farm office and joint manager Tina Coleman. The store at the intersection of Route 116 and Stony Hill Road in Bristol caters exclusively with a rainbow of Adirondack-style chairs made from poly. The Fun Back Folding Chair (STW) is the company's most popular item, and no wonder: It can be ordered in 20 colors, from lime green to imitation cherry or "weatherwood."

Derived by Dave Livingston of Bristol, the business has expanded its current location since 2008. Over the past decade or so, Coleman says, buyers have gradually come to favor poly chairs over the traditional wooden ones. The recycled plastic, she explains, "dries and sets and holds" and requires "less maintenance." In fact, poly is so popular that Livingston Farm no longer keeps wooden chairs in stock on-site; they have to be specially ordered. Rockers, gliders, ottomans and tables are available, too.



Sterling Furniture Works' Cypress Newport chair

Sterling Furniture Works

400 Pine Street, Burlington, 303-8400
sterlingfurnitureworks.com

When Marc Leone joined Burlington's Sterling Hardware in 2010, he brought a whole new department with him: custom furniture. Owned by David Wilson and Bruce Schuman, the South End company has been in business for about four decades. Today, Leone keeps busy with a little bit of everything: from designing and fabricating replacement architectural elements to making custom dinner tables, cabinets and retail fixtures. A recent job was the handsome wood counter for the shop's next-door neighbor, Speeder & Park Coffee.

Currently, Sterling Furniture Works offers only one outdoor chair design: the Westport (STW). Staff usually refer to it as their "town chair." Leone toys during a recent visit. The studio floor models are made from — what else? — hardwoods: reddish cypress and walnut. The cypress, Leone says, has proven longevity and weathers to a nice gray over time.

He also notes the Westport's comfort and striking visual appeal. "True Adirondack chairs are why make busy?" Leone says. "There's a lot more angles and a slope on them." Sitting in the Westport's slatted ones legs between the knees,

he elaborates: while a "true Adirondack" chair has a flatter seat, does it matter? "I'd certainly know the distinction," Leone says. "They tend to be really close about it."

Contact: rachel@sterlingfurniture.com

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POLY CHAIRS OVER THE
TRADITIONAL WOODEN ONES.

ONE DAY I STUFFED OLD TAX RETURNS AND PREMILLENNIAL PHONE BILLS INTO THE WOODSTOVE.



- **SCHEDULE A SERIES OF CLEANING APPOINTMENTS** on your calendar and treat these like doctor visits so you're not likely to postpone or cancel.
- **DON'T GO IT ALONE.** Many items can bring up uncomfortable feelings (nostalgia, nostalgia, regret, etc.), otherwise you would have chucked them long ago. Have an accountability buddy or a decluttering-concussive family member or friend to cheer you on. I had my online classmate, Schatz had her daughter — and, eventually, her editor — on board to make sure the didn't abandon ship.
- **IMPLEMENT A TEMPORARY SPOOKING FREEZE.** That is, do not go out and purchase organizational materials (such as, ahem, fabric cubes). The point is not to store stuff but to let go of it. Goodwill advises against acquiring anything non-essential while you commit to your cleanup.
- **START WITH THE BEDROOM.** Goodwill recommends reclaiming it and turning it into a peaceful retreat. This means no piles of clothes, overburdened bedside tables or aberrant items such as vacuum cleaners or exercise equipment. Each hoard of clothing should leave you with a soothing space to enjoy.
- **DOCUMENT YOUR SUCCESS** with before-and-after pictures. I wrote down everything I tackled: the linen closet, the car's center console, the medicine cabinet. My growing list gave me a sense of momentum and accomplishment.
- **LOAD CULLED ITEMS INTO YOUR CAR** and deliver them to a donation center or a dump within a week. Do not allow them to sit there making feelings of shame and defeat, or, again, to become miscompromised in your household.
- **CURATE.** If you have a big collection of neckties, sewing notions, magazines, T-shirts or dented spoons, select the best and let go of the rest. 🍷

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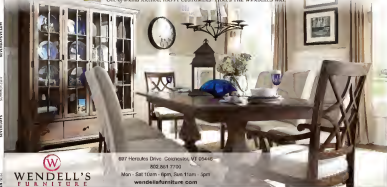
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ACCOMMODATIONS

An award-winning home "extension" is wheelchair accessible

BY AMY LILLY

Occasionally something appears on the market that makes so much sense, it's a mystery why no one offered it before. That distinction applies to Wheel Pad, an eco-friendly, modular house extension designed for wheelchair users.

At only 300 square feet, the bed-and-bath unit can be added on to an existing house without triggering zoning or building codes. It can be wheeled up to the house's side on a mobile, adjustable-height chassis base, a window or door of the house is removed for access between the two structures.

An entry ramp needs to be added, and an insulated base and extension cords attached to the home's system, but otherwise — voila!

With Wheel Pad, a family doesn't need to implement major renovations to the home in order to accommodate, say, an injured recurring vet or accident victim. And, for those suddenly

rendered dependent on others, the module offers more independence and privacy.

The pad has a built-in Hoyer lift used to facilitate moving the resident between bed and bath. Everything is at wheelchair height, eardrums, a built-in table, bath fixtures, windows. The floor is nondrip. The bathroom door pushes open in both directions.

All of that may sound institutional, but Wheel Pad decidedly does not resemble a hospital room.

"Joseph wanted it to be the coolest room in the house," says Julie Laneberger, who is married

ACCOMMODATIONS 39 FINE



The exterior of the Wheel Pad, an eco-friendly modular home extension designed for wheelchair users

Accommodations WORDS

us Wheel Pad's architect, Joseph Concato. The couple owns LineSpace Architecture in Wilmington, Lindeberger is the business manager.

They believe that "things don't need to cost more to be beautiful," as Lindeberger puts it. Accordingly, that lift truck doesn't just run across a bare ceiling; it's recessed behind ribbed panels of wood. Oak bars in the bedroom

aren't the standard stainless-steel but clear acrylic. Indeed, the bathroom stall fixtures to be straight out of a high-end architectural magazine, with corrugated stainless-steel walls and a decorative window. Colored LED lights line the perimeter of the living or sleeping area, and a cheerful design of overlapping circles in wood veneer decorates the walls.

So far, only one Wheel Pad exists. Built by architecture students and professors at Norwich University in Northfield, the prototype is destined to be live-in-lab beginning next month by Lindeberger and Concato's longtime friends, the Payne-Meyers of Pacey Cyretha Payne-Meyer, 59, broke her neck in Hawtort last Easter Sunday while body-surfing with their three sons and is currently paralyzed from the chest down.

If it weren't for Wheel Pad, her husband, Rod, says, "We would have been doing all kinds of renovations in the house to make it wheelchair accessible." Now Cyretha can be moved directly from the rehab facility back home. Rod hasn't seen the Wheel Pad yet, he says, but, judging from the photos, declares that "everything being at a level that's useful to someone in a wheelchair" will be a godsend.

"You don't think like that and you have to," he adds.

Because the prototype was built entirely on donations, it will be perpetually free-based on a six- to 18-month basis. When the Payne-Meyers are finished with it, LineSpace will refurbish it and pass it on to someone else in need.

Next month, three more Wheel Pads are going into production, says Lindeberger. She expects to sell them for

\$60,000 apiece to those interested in permanent installation, or to lease them for \$1,000 per month—a cost much lower than most nursing homes, she points out.

Because of the level of international interest Wheel Pad has generated, the couple has launched it as a separate business. Last year, the project won an award for the annual category of "best temporary small space" from *World Architecture News*, a London-based

publication. Resulting inquiries have come in from Great Britain, New Zealand, Holland and beyond, says Lindeberger.

And Lindeberger herself was just named Socialpreneur 2017 by the organization Leading Women Entrepreneurs. She also just landed a

slot as a finalist in AARP's Innovation Challenge.

Meanwhile, LineSpace has been testing the prototype around Vermont using a Ford pickup. (Any full-size truck with a trailer hitch will do the job.) Visits to hospitals, care facilities and the Tiny House Fair in Brattleboro have generated interest from, among others, individuals with ALS, multiple myeloma and cerebral palsy.

While Lindeberger and Concato develop their spin-off business, they will both continue to head LineSpace. The firm's projects include the expansion of Mount Snow ski resort, lobby Concato, and smaller projects such as the post-Tropical Storm Irene Redfield River Apartments in Wilmington, which was an American Institute of Architects-Vermont award in 2014.

"We have done wonderful projects, both public and private," says Lindeberger, but "the opportunity to design something that will assist families and keep them together" puts Wheel Pad at the top of their accomplishments.

At the *World Architecture News* jury commented, "Nothing about this space speaks of being patronizing or being sympathetic. This is a home." ☛

Contact: Ally@sevendaysnet.com

INFO

Learn more at wheelpad.com and linespace.com.



TOP LEFT/RIGHT: Wheel Pad bedroom, outdoor patio and bath



Simple Tips to Boost CURB APPEAL

A first impression is important, especially for your home!
Use these simple tips to boost the overall look and feel of your home.

- 1 MAKE A BOLD FRONT ENTRANCE** - The front entrance is a focal point of your home. Give your front door a pop of bold paint color, or add accent pieces like wreaths or furniture.
- 2 CLEAN UP AROUND THE HOUSE** - Sounds simple but it can make a big difference! Put away kid toys and anything else that can be stored in a garage or shed. Also consider a fresh coat of exterior paint and also about sealing your cracked driveway.
- 3 LANDSCAPING** - Container gardens add a welcoming feel and bright flowers can add much needed color to your home. Make sure that the lawn is attended and that flower beds are weeded and mulched.
- 4 PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR WINDOWS** - Clean window glass and frames, repaint trim and clean screens. Do your windows still bring down the appearance of your home? Maybe it's time to think about replacement! Replacing front-facing windows and doors can often make a bigger impact than renovations inside the home.

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